

OLD WOUNDS
A NICK SHELBY CASE
EPISODE 1

Written by

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FADE IN.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

NICK SHELBY (31) stares, frowning with confusion. His mouth slightly agape. A good looking man with strong facial features and clean shaven.

LOUISE DANVER (23) stands before him by the door. Her eyes are sad and sorrowful. She is petite with short blonde hair and piercing blue eyes.

NICK (V.O.)

The pain in my chest spread and tightened. It wasn't like that of a bullet, which I had first hand experience of, but it hurt just as much. A broken heart can bring down the tallest of men like an imploding skyscraper and now this beautiful woman I call my fiancé was pushing the detonator.

Louise opens the door allowing a bright white light to enter the dimly lit room. She steps outside pulling the door shut behind her.

It slams.

INT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

Nick opens his eyes to find himself sat in his banged up car. Tired eyed and bearded. He looks around to get his bearings.

NICK (V.O.)

I've been having that dream a lot. It's been three weeks since she left, but her goodbye is fresh in my head, like it only happened yesterday.

Nick's eye is caught by something up ahead.

INT/EXT. NICK'S CAR/APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

On the second floor of a small apartment block a YOUNG WOMAN (17) approaches the window about to draw the curtains closed.

INT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

Nick picks up a camera from the passenger seat and snaps a couple of pictures of the woman.

NICK (V.O.)

Before you get the wrong impression, let me explain I'm a private investigator. I don't get off on this sort of thing, but it pays the bills.

INT/EXT. NICK'S CAR/APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

An TALL MAN (28) steps up behind the woman and wraps his arms around her waist. He kisses her neck.

NICK (V.O.)

It's the same old story. Teen girl is seduced by older man. These tales never end well.

Nick snaps a couple more pictures, just before she draws the curtains.

INT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

Nick stares at the display screen on the back of the camera as he flicks through the photos.

NICK (V.O.)

I'm no David Bailey, but I capture quite the image.

INT. DINER - DAY

Nick sits in a booth opposite a stressed MR RICHMOND(45) pouring over Nick's photography work. Mr Richmond wears a scraggy suit and his hair is ruffled.

NICK

Your daughter is staying in a cheap apartment in Inglewood. It seems she's got herself a roommate.

Mr Richmond looks up at Nick with strained eyes.

MR RICHMOND

What's the address?

NICK

Now, Mr Richmond, you only asked me to find her, make sure she was okay. Giving you the address doesn't strike me as a smart decision, given the circumstances. You have the look of someone who's planning to do something irrational.

MR RICHMOND

What I do with the information is my business, Mr Shelby. I'm paying you to serve my interests. If my interests change that is no concern of yours. I'm willing to pay extra.

Mr Richmond reaches into his pocket and pulls out a wad of notes he places them down on the table. Nick takes the money and counts it before pocketing the cash.

NICK

1404 Lime Street. Apartment 2C.

Mr Richmond gathers together the photos into a large envelope and stands.

MR RICHMOND

I appreciate your professionalism and discretion, Mr Shelby.

NICK

Of course.

Mr Richmond nods then exits the diner in haste. Nick leans back in his chair.

NICK (V.O.)

I'm sure I've done the right thing giving him the address, but I guess we'll see. In the meantime, that extra two hundred dollars will keep a roof over my head and food in my stomach another month, so no matter what you think, in my eyes, it was worth it.

Nick gets up and exits the diner.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nick approaches the front door. Frosted glass is built into the door with the words 'Shelby Private Investigations' printed on it.

He unlocks the door and steps inside.

He steps on a small piece of paper sitting on the floor. He picks it up and unfolds it.

It reads 'Nick, Please visit me at my family's home. It's important. Stephanie.'

NICK (V.O.)
Stephanie? Why would she be
contacting me? No doubt, it was
regarding Louise, but what?

Nick takes a moment to absorb these words. He folds the paper and pockets it. He turns and exits the apartment closing the door behind him.

EXT. DANVER FAMILY HOME - DAY

Nick pulls up outside the large white house. A picket fence pens in a lush green lawn out front. He glances over at the columned front entrance.

FLASHBACK

EXT. DANVER FAMILY HOME - DAY

Louise leads Nick up the garden path toward the large double front door. She is giddy with excitement, pulling Nick by his hand.

LOUISE
I can't wait for them to meet you.
They're going to love you.

NICK
(laughing)
Will you calm down.

LOUISE
I can't help it. I'm so excited.

Louise rings the doorbell. She stares at Nick grinning while they wait. The door opens. A hispanic maid MARIA (50) greets them.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Hello, Maria.

 MARIA
Miss Louise.

Maria steps aside to allow Louise and Nick to enter.

INT. DANVER FAMILY HOME, FOYER - DAY

Maria closes the door behind them. Louise still has a firm grip on Nick's hand as he stares around at the large open air entrance hall.

 LOUISE
Where are Stephanie and Mother?

 MARIA
They are out on the veranda.

Louise pulls Nick through the house. Nick glances over at Maria.

 NICK
It was a pleasure.

Maria smiles and nods.

EXT. DANVER FAMILY HOME, VERANDA - DAY

Louise and Nick step out the patio doors onto the wooden deck. Louise's mother, JEMIMA (45) sits at a table knitting. Her sister STEPHANIE (25) lounges on a deck chair reading a book.

Jemima glances up over the rim of her glasses at Louise and smiles.

 JEMIMA
Hello, dear.

 LOUISE
Mother, Stephanie. I'd like to introduce you to Nick.

Nick approaches Jemima and extends a hand.

 NICK
It's a pleasure to meet you, Ma'am.

 JEMIMA
And you Nick. Please, call me Jem.

Jemima places her hand in Nick's. He raises it and kisses her knuckles. He looks up at her with a charming smile.

NICK
If you insist, Jem.

JEMIMA
(blushing)
Oh my, so polite.

Stephanie puts down her book and stands. She approaches Nick and extends her hand. Nick leans in to kiss hers, but she snatches it from his grip.

STEPHANIE
I'll save you the effort. That's not going to impress me.

Nick grins.

LOUISE
I have some exciting news for you both. We are getting married.

Louise flashes the engagement ring on her finger.

JEMIMA
Oh that is wonderful, dear. I'm so happy for you.

Stephanie stares at Nick. Jemima embraces Louise and kisses her on the cheek.

She takes Louise's hand and leans in close peering through her glasses to get a clearer look.

LOUISE
Isn't it beautiful?

JEMIMA
It certainly is.

LOUISE
What do you think, Stephanie?

STEPHANIE
(glancing at the ring
briefly)
It's pretty. Could I speak to you alone, dear sister?

LOUISE
Sure.

Louise follows Stephanie over to the corner of the veranda. Nick watches them as they seem to have a serious heated conversation.

JEMIMA

What line of work are you in, Nick?

NICK

I used to be a detective with the LAPD, but I've recently started my own private investigations company.

JEMIMA

Oh, how fascinating?

Nick continues to watch Louise and Stephanie argue. Stephanie places a reassuring hand on Louise's shoulder, but she slaps it away. Louise storms over to Nick and grabs his arm.

LOUISE

Come on. I think it's time we left.

JEMIMA

So soon? But you just arrived.

LOUISE

We have a wedding to organise.

Louise stares daggers at Stephanie.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

(To Nick)

Come on.

Louise pulls Nick toward the patio doors. He looks over his shoulder toward Stephanie and Jemima.

NICK

Nice meeting you.

JEMIMA

Goodbye.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. DANVER FAMILY HOME - DAY

Nick is still staring at the house.

NICK (V.O.)

All that seems so long ago now. I didn't think I'd ever set foot in this house again.

He takes a deep breath and opens the car door.

INT. DANVER FAMILY HOME - DAY

A sorrowful looking Maria opens the door to Nick. He smiles.

NICK
Hello, Maria.

MARIA
Oh, Mr Shelby. Please, come in.
Miss Stephanie is expecting you.
She's in the living room.

INT. DANVER FAMILY HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nick enters to find Jemima sat in a chair by the fire. She holds a handkerchief, her eyes red from tears. Nick frowns with concern. He is about to speak, but hesitates.

Stephanie gets up from a couch and rushes over to him.

STEPHANIE
Oh, Nick.

Stephanie wraps her arms around him tightly.

NICK
What is it?

Stephanie releases him and looks into his eyes.

STEPHANIE
Terrible news. Absolutely terrible.

NICK
What's going on?

Stephanie glances over at her mother staring into space.

STEPHANIE
Let's go through to the study.

INT. DANVER FAMILY HOME, STUDY - DAY

Stephanie leads Nick into the study.

STEPHANIE
Close the door.

Nick does as he's asked.

NICK

Stephanie, will you tell me what this is all about?

STEPHANIE

You should take a seat.

NICK

I'd rather stand, if it's all the same.

STEPHANIE

Very well. This morning, Maria returned home from the market with a copy of a Mexican newspaper. Something she does all the time. Only this time, when she sat down to read it, she let out a terrible scream.

Stephanie approaches the desk and picks up a newspaper. She flicks open to a specific page and lays it back down on the desk. She takes a step back.

Nick cautiously approaches the newspaper. As he nears a photograph of Louise becomes clear. The headline reads 'Mujer Americana Encontrada Muerta'.

NICK (V.O.)

I'm not fluent in Spanish, but I know just enough to tell the words 'Americana', 'Muerta' plus a picture of Louise ain't painting a pretty picture.

Nick stares in shock. He looks over at Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

She's dead. My sister is dead.

Nick picks up the paper to analyse the article.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

It says she was shot in the face. Who would do something like that?

NICK

It says here the victim's name is Lucy Stevens.

STEPHANIE

That's the name they found in her passport.

(MORE)

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

We've tried contacting the Mexican authorities to tell them, but they're no help. I just don't understand, why would Louise be in Mexico with a fake passport? And why would someone kill her?

Nick nods in agreement.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I was thinking, maybe you could find out.

Nick turns to Stephanie. He shakes his head.

NICK

I don't know.

Nick puts down the paper. Stephanie moves closer and places a hand on his arm.

STEPHANIE

Please. You're a private investigator, right? This is what you do.

NICK

You don't understand. I'm trying to move on with my life. I don't want to open old wounds.

STEPHANIE

But surely you still want to know why she left so abruptly without explanation. We all do. If you could find out why she was there, it may become clear, you may even find closure. Maybe she was in trouble, she had no choice. There's a whole host of possibilities. Don't you want to know why?

NICK

Of course, I want to know. But something like this could just make the whole deal ten times worse. More complicated. Just confuse me more.

STEPHANIE

But you won't know until you start asking those questions. Please, Nick. For my mother at least.

Stephanie stares at Nick with puppy dog eyes. Nick exhales with frustration.

INT. NICK'S CAR - DAY

Nick is driving down a highway.

NICK (V.O.)

It took more persuading than I expected. Of course I want to know why Louise left without a reason, but what if I don't like that reason. It's like when I'm asked to find a missing person, chances are I'll find them dead and I wonder what would the families prefer, to never find them, but maintain the hope they're still alive or find them, but know they're dead? Sometimes no answer is better than a bad one.

Nick glances up at a sign going overhead. In large letters it reads 'Mexico Border, 1/2 Mile'.

FADE OUT